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A

LETTER

CONCERNING

SEPARATION,

Written formerly by a

Reverend Author;

And recommended to All (eſpecially the truly Chriſtian and Honeſt-minded) Members of the Separation within this Diſtracted and Divided Kingdom.

Rom. 16. *v.* 17. *Now I beſeech you, Brethren, Mark them which cauſe* Diviſions, &c.
Jude. 19. *Theſe be they who* Separate *themſelves,* Senſual, *having* not *the* Spirit.
2. Cor. 13. *v.* 11. —— *Be of one Mind, live in Peace; and the* God *of* Love *and* Peace *ſhall be with you.*

London, Printed for *W. D.* 1681.

The Publiſher to the well-minded Reader.

THe Demeanor and Language of the Conceited Zealot ſays, Stand by thy ſelf, come not near to Me, I am Holyer than Thou: *That of the Phariſee*, God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are. *The ſentiments and expreſſions of both combined, make one* Modern Separatiſt. *Saint* Paul's *Dialect on the other hand is*, We beſeech you, Brethren, mark them which cauſe Diviſions, and avoid them. *And his motive is founded on this Reaſon, That he who Loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen (and can hebe ſaid to love his Brother who ſeparates and divides from him?) how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen? Our Bleſſed Saviour has therefore (who beſt might) umpired the buſineſs, and aſſured you, That* by this ſhall all men know you to be his Diſciples, if you love one another. *In the name, and for the ſake of our Common Saviour, I call upon you my* Brethren *of the* Separation (*unleſs you value them who abuſe the Holy name of Jeſus more than Jeſus himſelf*) *That you weigh and duly ponder our Bleſſed Saviours words, and ſtudy the Advice of his Apoſtle* St. Paul. *And you will then upon mature calm thoughts not be ſo ready to inveigh againſt the* MISCHIEF *of* IMPOSITIONS, *as to abhor the* UNREASONABLENESS *of* SEPARATION. *In a word, ſince* Charity *is the moſt extenſive, and* Humility *the foundation of all Chriſtian* Graces; *whether it be more equal, That the* Eſtabliſhed Laws Eccleſiaſtical *ſhould vail to* private humour, *or you our brethren of the Separation, kindly and modeſtly ſubmit your ſelves to theſe* Laws, *let your own* private Conſciences *be the* Sole Judges.

To Mr. Smith *and Mr.* Rob. *Ring-leaders of the late* Separation *at* Amſterdam.

Ep. 1. *Setting forth their* injury *done to the* Church, *the* Injuſtice *of your* Cauſe, *and* Fearfulneſs *of their* Offence: Cenſuring *and* Adviſing *them.*

E *hear* of your *SEPARATION*, and *Mourn*; yet not ſo much for *You*, as for your *Wrong*: You could not do a greater *Injury* to your Mother than to *flie* from Her. Say ſhe were *Poor*, *Ragged*, *Weak*; ſay ſhe were *Deformed*; yet ſhe is not *Infectious*: Or if ſhe were, yet ſhe is *yours*. This were Cauſe enough for you to *Lament* her, to *Pray* for her, to labour for her Redreſs; not to *Avoid* Her: This unnaturalneſs is ſhameful, and more heinous in you, who are reported, not *Parties* in this Evil, but *Authors*: Your *Flight* is not ſo much as your *Miſ-guidance*. Plead not: This fault is paſt excuſe. If we ſhould *All* follow *You*, this were the way, of a *Church* (as you plead) imperfect, to make *no Church*; and of a *Remedy* to make a *Diſeaſe*. Still the fruit of our *Charity* to you is, beſides our *Grief*, *Pity*. Your *Zeal* of Truth has *miſled* you, and you others; a *Zeal*, if *Honeſt*, yet *Blind-folded*, and led by *Self-will*.

Oh that you loved Peace but half ſo well as Truth! then this *Breach* had never been; and you that are yet *Brethren* had been ſtill *Companions*. *Go out of Babylon*, you ſay; the Voice not of *Schiſm*, but of *Holineſs*. Know you where you are? Look about you, I beſeech you, look behind you; and ſee if we have not left it upon our Backs. She her ſelf feels, and ſees that ſhe is *Abandoned*; and complains to all the World, that *we* have not only *forſaken*, but *ſpoyl'd* Her; and *yet* you ſay, *COME OUT OF BABILON.*

And except you will be willingly *Blind*, you may ſee the *Heaps* of her *Altars*, the *Aſhes* of her *Idols*, the *Ruines* of her *Monuments*, the *Condemnation* of her *Errors*, the *Revenge* of her *Abominations*. And are we *Tet* in *Babylon*? Is *Babylon Tet* among *us*?

Where are the *main* Buildings of that *ACCURSED CITY*? Thoſe high and proud Towers of that *Univerſal Hierarchy*, *Infallible Judgment*, Diſpenſations with the Laws of God, and ſins of Men: *Diſpoſition* of Kingdoms and *Depoſion* of Princes, parting ſtakes with God in our Converſion, through Freedom of Will; in our Salvation, through the Merit of our Works? Where are thoſe *Rotten* heaps (rotten, not through Age, but Corruption) of Tranſubſtantiating of Bread, Adoring of Images, multitude of Sacraments, power of Indulgencies, neceſſity of Confeſſion, profit of Pilgrimages, conſtrained and approved Ignorance, unknown Devotions? Where are thoſe deep Vaults (if not Mines) of Pennances and Purgatories, and whatſoever elſe hath been deviſed by thoſe *Popelings*, whether profitable or glorious, againſt the Lord and his Chriſt? Are they not all razed, and buried in the Duſt? Hath not the Majeſty of her Gods, like as was done to *Mithra* and *Serapis*, been long agone offer'd to the publick laughter of the Vulgar? What is this but to go, yea, to run (if not to flie) out of *Babylon*? But as every man is an hearty Patron of his own Actions, and it is a deſperate Cauſe

that

that hath no Plea) you alledge our comorting in Ceremonies, and ſay, ſtill we tarry in the Suburbs. Grant that theſe were as ill as an Enemy can make them, or can pretend them: You are deceived, if you think the Walls of *Babylon* ſtand upon *Ceremonies*.

Subſtantial Errors are both her Foundation and Frame.

Theſe Ritual obſervations are not ſo much as Tile and Reed, rather like to ſome Fan upon the Roof; for Ornament, more than uſe: not parts of the Building but neceſſary Appendances. If you take them otherwiſe, you wrong the Church; if thus, and yet depart, you wrong it and your ſelf: As if you would have perſuaded Righteous *Lot* not to ſtay in *Zoar*, becauſe it was ſo near *Sodom*. I fear, if you had ſeen the Mony-changers in the Temple, however you would have pray'd or taught there: Chriſt did it, not forſaking the place but ſcourging the Offenders: And this is the Valour of Chriſtian Teachers: To oppoſe Abuſes, not to run away from them: Where ſhall you not thus find *Babylon*? Would you have run from *Geneva* becauſe of her Wafers? Or from *Corinth*, for her diſorder'd Love Feaſts? Either run out of the World, or your flight is Vain. If experience of Change teach you not, that you ſhall find your *Babylon* every where, return not. Compare the place you have left, with that you have choſen: Let not fear of ſeeming to repent over-ſoon, make you partial. Lo, there a common harbour of all Opinions, of all Hereſies; if not a mixture. Here you drew in the free and clear Air of the Goſpel, without that odious compoſition of *Judaiſm*, *Arrianiſm*, *Anabaptiſm*: There you live in the ſtench of theſe and more. You are unworthy of pity, if you will approve your miſery. Say, if you can, That the *Church* of *England* (if ſhe were not yours) is not an Heaven to *Amſterdam*. How is it then, that our Gnats are harder to ſwallow, than their Camels? And that whilſt all Chriſtendom magnifies our happineſs and applauds it; your handful alone, ſo deteſts our Enormities, that you deſpiſe our Graces? See whether in this you make not God a loſer.

The thanks of all his favours is loſt, becauſe you want more: and in the mean time, who gains by this Sequeſtration, but *Rome* and *Hell*? How do they inſult in this Advantage, that our Mother's own Children condemn her for Unclean, that we are dayly weakened by our Diviſions, that the rude multitude hath ſo palpable a motive to diſtruſt us? Sure, you intended it not: but if you had been their hired Agent you could not have done our Enemies greater ſervice.

The God of Heaven open your Eyes, that you may ſee the unjuſtice of that Zeal which hath tranſported you: and turn your heart to an endeavour of all Chriſtian ſatisfaction: otherwiſe, your Souls ſhall find too late, that it had been a Thouſand times better to *ſwallow* a *Ceremony*, than to *rend* a *Church*: yea, That even Whoredoms and Murders ſhall abide an eaſier Anſwer than *SEPARATION*. I have done if only I have adviſed you of that fearful threatning of the *Wiſe man*. *The Eye that mocketh his FATHER, and deſpiſeth the Government of his MOTHER, The Ravens of the Valley ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles eat it.*

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